NUMB. XVII.

The LAY-MONK.

Munera, crede mihi, placant Hominesq; Deosq;. Ovid.

From MONDAY, *December* 21. to WEDNESDAY, *December* 23. 1713.

I Am oblig'd to the Author of the following Letter, for aſſiſting me to furniſh out an Entertainment to my Readers ſo proper to the Seaſon.

To Mr. JACOB RAVENSCROFT.

SIR,

'I Am a conſtant Reader of your Papers, and 'have been ſo well entertain'd by them, that 'I have had a great Mind to make ſome Preſent 'to the *Lay-Monaſtery*. I once thought to ſhew my 'Reſpect, by ſending ſome ſmall Gift or other 'which might be ſuitable to the Seaſon of the Year; 'but I fancy you live too well to have any Occaſion 'for it. The next Thought that came into myHead, 'was to write a Paper, and ſubmit it to your Cor'rection, yet ſtill with an Eye to my firſt Deſign, 'and to the Seaſon, as I ſaid, which introduces a 'general Scene of Sociableneſs, Hoſpitality, and 'good Cheer. With this Thought I walk'd the 'other Morning thro' the *Strand*, and was en'tertain'd with the Sight of Objects ſo pertinent 'to my Meditation, as if my Thoughts, as they 'call it, had been bound by them. I had much 'ado to paſs along in ſome Places, the Street was 'ſo crowded with Porters, that panted under 'Loads of Country Luxury, againſt the approach'ing Feſtival. One carry'd on his Back a whole 'Poulterer's Shop of wild and tame Fowl; whilſt 'another bow'd under the Weight of ſubſtantial 'Chines and Turkeys. It was a Pleaſure to ob'ſerve this Commerce between the City and 'Country, and to ſee the Spice, Plumbs, Sugar 'and Wine, exported from the Town, produce 'Returns of Fowl, and Remittances of Bacon 'and Winter-Veniſon. But the ſtately Pillars of 'Brawn, thoſe Monuments of *Britiſh* Diſtinction, 'moſt delighted me, in which this Iſland triumphs 'over all *Europe*; and I fancy that Travellers look 'upon theſe eatable Columns as ſo many Emblems 'of our Strength, and with the ſame Surprize 'that they behold the huge Stones rais'd on *Saliſ'bury-Plain*, to the Memory of our robuſt An'ceſtors.

'When I came Home in the Evening, I found 'an agreeable Friend of mine waiting for me at 'my Lodgings, who was return'd to Town the 'Day before; and over a Glaſs of Wine, I related 'to him the Obſervations I had been amuſing my'ſelf with, as I paſs'd the Streets. When I had 'ended, he reply'd,-----I have a Country Preſent 'ſent to me this very Morning; but not as a Mark 'of Affection from a Friend, but from a Cheating 'Rogue, my Tenant, who not only makes me no 'Remittance for a good Farm of mine, except of 'Two Cheeſes at *Michaelmas*, and a Chine and 'Turkey at *Chriſtmas*; but brings me in Debtor 'every Year Five or Six Pounds for Improvements 'and Repairs. If the Raſcal goes on at this Rate, 'I reſolve to file a Bill in *Chancery* againſt him, 'to oblige him to take the Eſtate off my Hands, 'and become the Proprietor and Landlord himſelf. 'But I have another Reſpect paid me, from a bet'ter Tenant, of a Collar of Brawn, which I pre'fer, as I obſerve you do, to all the Meats in the 'World. When this proud Obelisk ſtands tow'r'ing at the upper-end of the Table, how does 'it put the *French* Kickſhaws, and little Diſhes of

'*Italy*

(Price Three Half-pence.)

' *Italy* out of Countenance? *Juvenal* was in the ' right, when he ſaid the Fair was a Creature ' made for Feaſts; and had the *Romans* known the ' Art of turning him ſo well into Brawn, they ' would have celebrated him above their Lampreys, ' Mullets, Peacocks, and all their native or impor- ' ted Luxury. Now you muſt know, continu'd ' my Friend, that I my ſelf laſt Week made a Pre- ' ſent to a Female of my Acquaintance of a fat ' Gooſe; but, to tell you the Truth, it was ' bought in Town. I took Care, however, to ' have it ſent with a Letter, a Copy of which is ' in my Pocket. Upon this he pluck'd out the ' Letter; and finding it to the Purpoſe of what I ' had been thinking of before, I prevail'd with ' him to let me ſend it to you, that if you think ' it worth the while, it may ſerve you to help fill ' up a *Chriſtmas* Paper. I am with much Reſpect ' to your ſelf and your Society,

S I R,

Dec. 18. 1713.

Your Humble Servant,

E. F.

To ASPASIA.

Madam,

" THE Favours I lately receiv'd from your ſelf " and my dear Kinſman your Husband have " laid me under ſuch Obligations, that I am at a " Loſs how to ſhew my Gratitude. If it were in " my Power, I wou'd make you ſuitable Returns; " but while you enjoy an Affluence of all Things, " and are ſo happy in an affectionate Husband, and " obedient and beautiful Children, how is it poſſi- " ble that I ſhould add to your Felicity?

" I preſume, *Madam*, to ſend you by the Bearer " the poor Preſent of a Country Gooſe, which, I " hope, you will not ſlight for its Meanneſs, when " you regard it as the Teſtimony of the Goodwill " of a Friend; tho' at the ſame time I am not " without my Fears, that I ſhall be rallied for " chuſing ſuch a ſilly Animal to make you my " Compliments.

" I have been thinking that this will make fine " Work, if it comes to be known in the Com- " monwealth of Birds; ſince the proudeſt Swan " would have grown yet prouder to have been " employ'd in this Meſſage. The Turkey-Cock, " which is often put upon this Kind of Duty, " will redden, and ſtrutting with Reſentment, " ask how I came to pitch upon ſuch a ſenſeleſs " cackling Orator to expreſs my Acknowledg- " ments? (for Birds may ſpeak on ſuch a Provoca- " tion; and *Æſop* you know, *Madam*, has given " them Speech on many Occaſions of leſs Conſe- " quence) Had you not, he will ſay, been as much " without Reflection as your fooliſh Envoy, you " wou'd never have made ſuch a Choice. The " Pheaſant, to be ſure, will not take it leſs in " Wrath that he, who has ſo long been a Favou- " rite of the fair Sex, ſhould be ſlighted at ſo cri- " tical a Juncture. And any Man may ſee the Pea- " cock will bear me an immortal Grudge, that in " Contempt of a Bird of his Quality, graceful " Stature, and fine Feathers, I ſhould depute a " Fowl ſo much his Inferior to the Priviledge of " waiting on you. No doubt the Patridge too " will be out of Humour, and ask why a Poſt of " ſuch Honour had not been put in Commiſſion, " and then 3 or 4 Brace of that numerous Family " might have paid you their Reſpects: At leaſt he'll " add, Such an Office might have been ſplit be- " tween ſome of our Feather and as many Wild " Ducks. Then, *Madam*, the Quails, the Plovers, " the Snipes, and Heathpoults, all familiar among " the Ladies, the very Birds in Faſhion, and per- " petually going on ſuch Errands, will look on it " as an unpardonable Crime, that neglecting them " I have prefer'd ſo unworthy a Competitor; and " I don't know whether they will not carry their " Reſentments ſo far, as to take Care that none " of their delicious Fraternities ſhall hereafter ap- " pear at any Table where I am preſent. To get " free of this, all I can alledge is, that I have " perhaps choſen at leaſt a proper Repreſentative " of the Principal, that deputed him; and this I " will ſay for my Gooſe, that as it is deſign'd to " make you merry, ſo it is young, and far more " tender than one which came to a Table where " I was very lately; for that was ſo dry and " hard, that I took it for an old *Norman* Fowl, " that came into *England* with the Conqueror. " However, the Maſter of the Houſe, as his Man- " ner is, commended the Entertainment, and we " who were his Gueſts were almoſt choak'd out " of meer Civility. I have done with my Gooſe; " and when you and my dear Couſin begin with " it, I wiſh you as merry as I was when I had the " Honour laſt of being at your Table.

Madam,

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

Your moſt humble Servant.

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